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C O N F I D E N T I A L ROME 004682

SIPDIS

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TAGS: [PREL](#) [ETTC](#) [KPAL](#) [UP](#) [CO](#) [HR](#) [CG](#) [RW](#) [IT](#) [EUN](#)

SUBJECT: ITALY ON EU GAERC/COUNCIL AGENDA: TURKEY WILL
RECEIVE A DATE, SO WILL CROATIA, BUT CONDITIONAL; CHINA
ARMS EMBARGO STAYS - FOR NOW.

REF: STATE 258831

Classified By: POL MINISTER COUNSELOR TOM COUNTRYMAN. REASON: 1.5 (B)(
D)

Enlargement - Turkey and Croatia

1. (C) The MFA's Director for EU Integration, Michele Quaroni, told poloff that consensus was building around a Council conclusion with an unconditional date to begin Turkish accession negotiations. He was not sure whether the date would be during the first or second semester of 2005. France may ask the Council to consider delaying until the second semester so as not to complicate its referendum on the EU Constitution in the spring of 2005. Quaroni said the sticking point was Cyprus. Nicosia wants Ankara to agree to full normalization of relations, with recognition of the "Republic of Cyprus." Turkey is refusing to submit to any further conditions not contained in the Copenhagen Criteria. Quaroni said that the Presidency was working hard on a compromise "defacto recognition" in which Turkey would commit to recognizing the Republic of Cyprus on or before the date negotiations begin. He was hopeful that PM Erdogan and PM Balkenende could make progress on the issue when they met in The Hague on December 9.

2. (C) On December 6, DCM drew on reftel points to brief MFA Political Director Terzi on the US view that Croatia should improve cooperation with the ICTY before EU accession talks begin. Following up with Poloff, Quaroni and Balkans Office Director Andrea Orizio predicted that the Council conclusions would reflect fairly closely Italy's views on Croatian accession. Both agreed with reftel concerns that too positive a statement on Croatia would send the wrong signal on PIFWCs to Zagreb. Italy would advocate for a date to begin EU accession negotiations with Croatia. However, Orizio predicted the Council will make clear that the EU will reexamine Croatia's level of cooperation with the ICTY at a later date, and will suspend the negotiation start date if that cooperation is unsatisfactory. Italy fully supports that strategy.

UKRAINE

3. (SBU) EU CFSP Director Luigi Mattiolo said that Italy was encouraged by the close cooperation between the US and EU on the Ukraine crisis. He believed that the US and EU coordination on-the-ground and speaking with one voice brought the situation back from the brink of civil war. December 26 was a bit earlier than Italy had hoped for the next round of elections. Nonetheless, Italy will fully support a robust election monitoring mission through the OSCE. The GAERC will likely condition any statement on the EU's "Neighborhood Policy" to take into account Kiev's behavior in the run-up to and during the election.

CHINA ARMS/CODE OF CONDUCT

4. (C) Mattiolo said that Council language on the China Arms Embargo would reflect the conclusions of the December 8 EU-China Summit - both sides would work towards creating conditions under which the embargo could be lifted. Those conditions would include "significant" progress on human rights. He predicted that the growing movement among Member States, including Italy, for a transparent, comprehensive Code of Conduct could push the possibility of lifting the embargo out even beyond the Luxembourg Presidency.

SEMBLER

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